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BOOK NOTICES.

Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England. By Frederick William Maitland, LL.D., Downing Professor of the Laws of England in the University of Cambridge. Cloth, 543 pp. Little, Brown & Company, Boston, Mass., 1897.

It is a practice far too common among our modern lawyers to confine themselves to the study of the law as it exists to-day, leaving untouched the great field of its historical development. Nevertheless the few whose tastes lead them to investigate the causes which have led to the present state of English and American law find the subject one of fascinating interest. Such a pursuit, however, is not without its difficulties. After we have passed through the period which extends back from the present time to the twelfth or thirteenth century, we become at once involved in uncertainty. It is at this point that a work like that of Prof. Maitland's is of the greatest assistance. Facts and authorities far beyond the reach of the average student are collated and applied to the subject in a way which leaves no room for criticism. So reasonable are the theories of the author that we almost forget that they are theories at all; they appeal to us as realities. Prof. Maitland's method is retrogressive. Beginning with matters upon which there is little controversy he leads us back through the times subsequent to the Norman Conquest, into the hazy region beyond. In the first essay he shows the true aspect and character of the great land survey of William the Conqueror; in the second, the different sorts of land tenure are treated, and in the third is a detailed account of the systems of land measurement and taxation. We echo the confidence which the author expresses in his closing lines that the darkness which surrounds these early times will be soon dissipated, and desire to add that the bulk of the advance which has been made in this direction in late years has been due to Prof. Maitland's own efforts.